

Awakening moments

Awaken! The dawn is almost come
Open your eyes, the light is all around
Look, you will see yourself in others
Love, give what is not yours to keep 1

A bee drinks a flower's taste, sharingly
A bird flies freely in the sky, trackless
Its shadow touches the water, rippleless
Fill your life with spacious breath, selflessly 2

There is no presence like this very moment
Free your thought, slave not after the past
Be not a future robot: the future is now
There is no moment like the present 3

Peak experience? What goes up, goes down
Success? You must have known failure
Wealth? To have is not always to be
Reputation? Do you even know yourself? 4

See yourself as you would see others
Be truly kind to those who do not deserve it
Smile at the joy of others, it's easy really
You have done your best, it will all pass 5

Seek outside, you will find what you are looking for
Grasp something, your hand takes its shape
Let it go, you'll be more than what you ever have
Seek within, see the truth that's waiting for you 6

Time runs out if you run after it
Time stands still if you breathe rightly
Time grows if you love the moment
Time-free, when all is done and over 7

Those who talk a lot must have failed in everything else
If you listen only to them, you will lose even more
Gentle silence makes true music of what we hear
Inner stillness is the canvas for breathless beauty 8

Author's notes

This poem was inspired after my reading of Stephen and Martine Batchelor's picture poem, "Lazy Little Guide to Enlightenment," and from which I have taken a couple of lines.

The first verse is about interbeing, how all things are related in a conditioned manner, so that we only need to look at how interconnected we all are and to rejoice in this. This is the beginning of self-knowing.

Verse 2 is based on Dhammapada 62 and 93. The idea here is that of being in harmony with everything around us, not exploiting anything. When we are at peace with everything around us, it is easier to be at peace within.

Verse 3 is a reminder of our life's precious moments, that is, a life well lived. This echoes the wisdom of the Bhaddekaratta Suttas (M 131-134).

The first line of verse 4 is an insightful line taken from the Batchelors. Building on it is a reflection on how we should view things of the world. We need to differentiate worldly conditions and true happiness.

Verse 5 flows from verse 4, reminding us how we are intimately interconnected with others in the world. It is a reflection on the four divine abodes: lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity.

Verse 6 is a reflection of inner renunciation. The world outside is what we make of it, projections of our minds. When we understand better how we think and feel, we know the external world better. The second line is probably from one of the Upanishads.

Verse 7 speaks how we view time and our priorities in life. We tend to have time for people and things we like more than others. But do we work towards what is really good for us?

Verse 8 is a humorous take on success gurus who try to sell their images to others. Often we have to pay hefty sums only to learn their essential teachings which are actually elaborated in Buddhism. The best way to true success is to know our own hearts.

The poem is very much more than this. These are only brief notes, partly to credit my sources of inspiration, and also to encourage you to feel the poem for yourself, and perhaps discover some wonderful things about yourself.

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